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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 002832

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [VE](#) [MX](#)
SUBJECT: VENEZUELA REFUSES TO RECOGNIZE ELECTED MEXICAN
GOVERNMENT

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Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT DOWNES,
REASONS 1.4 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) Summary. President Chavez announced publicly September 12 that Venezuela does not yet recognize the elected Calderon government in Mexico. Chavez also criticized EU observer missions as having been excessively lax in Mexico and severe in Venezuela. Mexico and Venezuela, which downgraded relations from the ambassadorial level in November 2005, are not likely to exchange ambassadors anytime soon after Chavez' anti-Calderon outburst. Moreover, Chavez' decision to refuse to recognize the incoming Calderon government highlights the extent to which the BRV continues to stand outside the community of Latin American democracies (and, in this case, even Cuba) and normal diplomatic comity. Department may want to draw on Chavez' stance against the democratic elections in Mexico to help make the case against Venezuela in the upcoming UNSC election. End Summary.

Viva Pancho Villa (Not Felipe Calderon)

¶2. (U) On the margins of an official ceremony September 12 commemorating the fifth anniversary of the Women's Bank, President Chavez told the local media that Venezuela is still evaluating the results of the Mexican presidential elections. He stressed that Venezuela does not recognize the newly elected Calderon government. Chavez said he is concerned about the way in which elections in Mexico were conducted and the "complaints and evidence of strange things that may have occurred." Warming to his subject, Chavez insisted that the BRV's commitment is with people of Mexico, especially "the heroic population of Pancho Villa, and of Emiliano Zapata."

¶3. (SBU) Turning his outburst toward the United States, Chavez said all of Latin America has resisted the "battering" of the United States, adding that Mexico is the country that has "put up with and suffered the most U.S. aggression (sic)." In the same encounter with the local media, Chavez also suggested that the United States government planned and implemented the September 11 terrorist attacks (sic). He said he did not discount a theory that the Twin Towers had been dynamited from the inside, stating that "no building falls as such unless by an implosion."

Heaping Scorn on EU Observers

¶4. (C) Chavez also took aim while talking to the media September 12 at EU election observers, calling the EU observation mission in Mexico a "demonstration of the cynicism of the dominant classes in the world." More specifically, Chavez accused the EU of ignoring electoral fraud in the most recent Mexican presidential elections, while charging EU observers with putting Venezuelan elections under a "magnifying glass" to highlight "whatever little detail" as "alarming, presumed irregularities". Chavez' EU observation comments come just as the European Union is preparing to send an exploratory EU team to prepare the way for a bigger election observation mission to cover the December 3 presidential polls.

International Impact

¶5. (C) The Mexican government revoked the credentials of Venezuela's Ambassador and recalled its Ambassador to Venezuela on November 14, 2005, after Chavez publicly called President Fox a U.S. "lapdog." (Reftel). Chavez' latest outburst against Mexican President-Elect Calderon simply adds fuel to the fire between the BRV and Mexico, and we do not expect the two countries to exchange ambassadors again anytime soon. It also underscores Chavez' willingness to flout the consensus of the Latin American community of democracies (and Cuba too, in this instance) by being the only government in the region to refrain from recognizing President-Elect Calderon.

¶6. (C) Noting that Chavez' recent anti-Calderon (and yet another anti-American) outburst reached new heights of "Chavez delirium," retired Venezuelan Ambassador Sadio

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Garavini told poloff September 14 that Chavez' over-the-top rhetoric could scare away potential votes for Venezuela in the October UN Security Council race. Department may want to highlight Chavez' reluctance to recognize the freely-elected government in Mexico as yet another example of the BRV's disruptive role in international diplomacy. Chavez' position stands in sharp contrast with the positions of every other OAS member state as reflected in OAS Secretary General Jose Miguel Insulza's September 5 congratulatory call to Calderon and in the September 6 congratulatory statement issued by the OAS Chairman of the Permanent Council.

WHITAKER